

# NEWS RELEASE

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## **The Sands Centre Redevelopment**

### Work has started on £25 million improvement scheme

Work has started on a £25 million Sands Centre redevelopment scheme in Carlisle.

The major redevelopment of the leisure facility will include pools provision as well as significant improvements to the existing site.

The improved facilities will include a range of sustainable features which will support Carlisle City Council's plans for reducing carbon emissions, improving energy efficiency and providing sustainable, healthy transport options.

Due to the scale of the refurbishment works taking place the leisure centre programme will transfer to new customised facilities at the former Newman School, Lismore Place, Carlisle, CA1 1LZ until the completion of the project.

GLL, who manage The Sands Centre on the council's behalf, will continue to offer their members full gym provision, an extensive fitness class programme, a wide range of sports hall activities and lessons and courses. Changing rooms, showers and parking will also be available.

GLL expects to move to their new temporary facilities at Newman in May 2020, the exact date will be confirmed closer to the time. They will endeavour to keep any disruption to the service to a minimum, but they do expect to be closed for a short period to enable the move. During this short period members will have their membership upgraded to gym, swim and classes at any Better leisure centre in Cumbria.

The Arts & Entertainment programme will continue to take place as normal at The Sands Centre during the closure of the leisure facilities. Temporary facilities will be in place for catering, toilets and reception to ensure a great experience is maintained throughout the redevelopment. The entrance to the venue and the box office will be relocated.

Tom Rice, Partnership Manager for GLL in Carlisle, said: "We're delighted that works are about to begin on what will be a fantastic new Sands Centre. We're really pleased that with our partners Carlisle City Council we've been able to source great temporary facilities for our customers at the former Newman School. Our gym and fitness class programme plus lessons and courses will be able to continue throughout the project ensuring we're able to continue to help the local community get more active, more often over the coming weeks and months."

**More follows...**

In preparations for the works starting, the contractor working on the council's behalf has set up a large works compound on a section of the car park adjacent to Hardwicke Circus. Access is still available to The Sands car park at a new entrance on Newmarket Road (further down the road close to the entrance to the Swifts car park). The Swifts Bank car park is also available seven days a week, with the same parking and Early Bird offers are available.

The Sands Centre improvements will include:

- Main pool hall (25m x 17m, 8 lane) & learner pool with a moveable floor (20m x 8m) and a spectator seating gallery.
- Four court sports hall with a spectator gallery.
- 120 station fitness suite.
- Two dance studios.
- Spinning studio.
- Changing facilities.
- Changing Places facility.
- Dementia friendly design.
- NHS Physiotherapy suite.
- First Aid.
- Reception desk with offices.
- Environmental measures to support more efficient use of energy and photovoltaic panels and combined heat and power energy generation.

Leader of Carlisle City Council, Cllr John Mallinson, said:

“The Sands Centre redevelopment is a major project that will provide significant benefits. It represents a cornerstone in our plans to support our communities to continue to improve their health and wellbeing. There is a necessity to do the work. Carlisle desperately needs new swimming facilities. This is a one-off opportunity with a dual benefit of all the facilities being on one site.”

The transformational plans for extending and redeveloping the facilities in the city are accompanied by a range of new and developing partnership arrangements with GLL (leisure operator), Sport England, NHS providers, Active Cumbria, Cumbria County Council Public Health Team, sports clubs, community groups and other funders. The proposals for this new flagship facility will support a broad range of new programmes and opportunities for physical activity and mental health development.

The new extension will significantly improve the access opportunities for all our communities to use and enjoy the facilities and services. Access to the building will be significantly improved from all points as will the internal layout.

The development of the project has used an inclusive design approach to ensure equal access and wellbeing. This will assist users with physical and other conditions such as dementia to make full use of the site and surroundings.

The project will also consolidate the existing arrangements with the North Cumbria University Hospitals Trust Musculoskeletal (MSK) team. The MSK team already provide treatment services at The Sands Centre. The MSK team already provide treatment services at The Sands Centre but will be able to expand their services and develop new joint/collective treatment and rehabilitation activities with GLL and other partners.

Construction on The Sands Centre redevelopment will start this spring and is scheduled to be completed by winter 2021. The existing Pools provision on James Street will remain in place until all construction at The Sands Centre has been completed.

**Ends**